

Chief, Records Management Staff

4 March 1957

Records Management Officer for Reports and Correspondence

National Archives and Records Service Correspondence Management Workshop, 25 February - 1 March 1957.

1. Attached is an agenda of the workshop I attended last week. This was the last of two workshops given for representatives of Federal Agencies in the Washington, D. C. Area. Each member was asked to attend as an observer to determine the following:

- a. The relative merits of the workshop.
- b. What portions of the workshop should be given in his Agency?
- c. Who should be given the training?
- d. Who should give the training, i.e., agency personnel or members of the National Archives and Records Service?

2. The workshop was actually three workshops in one, either one of which can be given independently of the others. Here are my observations on each, and my opinions on their application to improving correspondence practices in headquarters.

Correspondence Management (the first and last two sessions of the workshop) Terry Beach, as usual, did a fine job of selling correspondence management as a paperwork management tool. He also offered excellent advice to those responsible for correspondence management programs. The text of his, "Introduction to Correspondence Management," would be most appropriate in a presentation to Operating Officials in headquarters. However, in the main, his session, "Installing and Operating a Correspondence Management Program," covered material of interest principally to the number one person in an agency responsible for its correspondence management program. I therefore recommend the following with respect to this portion of the workshop.

- a. That we use Terry Beach's "script" in any promotional presentations we make. This script may be obtained from National Archives and Records Service.

*Attachment*

- b. That we develop our own material on installing and operating a correspondence management program at the Operating Office level.

Plain Letters -- This portion of the workshop required the equivalent of two days. There were eight sessions, two sessions each on the four "S's" -- Shortness, Strength, Simplicity, and Sincerity. The handbook, Plain Letters, was the only textbook used. Each session, consisted of a comprehensive analysis of one of the four "s" factors through lectures, practical exercises, and discussions. For those who had never applied the 4s formula, these sessions were a revelation; for those who had, they were excellent refreshers. While the 4s formula applies principally to letters, it can be applied effectively to memorandums, staff papers and other forms of internal correspondence. I therefore recommend:

- a. That a member of the Agency Writing Workshop attend the next Plain Letters workshop conducted by National Archives and Records Service, to determine the appropriateness of including the 4s Formula in training given by the Writing Workshop Staff.
- b. That we consider again the development of a series of writing guides to keep alive interest in effective writing.

Form and Guide Letters -- The textbooks for this portion of the workshop were the GSA handbooks Form Letters and Guide Letters. Although these are excellent manuals, they could never supplant the training given by the workshop through lectures, graphics, exhibits of equipment, practice exercises, and discussions. From this workshop I gained an entirely new perspective. In particular, I feel that form and guide (or pattern) correspondence can be used to a much greater extent in headquarters. I therefore recommend:

- a. That I go forward with my plans to publicize the advantages of form and pattern correspondence.
- b. That we conduct a workshop for Area Records Officers whose responsibilities should cover the development and use of form and pattern correspondence.
- c. That the material used in the National Archives and Records Service Correspondence Management Workshop be procured for this training program.

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